

Sooner or later, everyone, in some part of their lives, wonders where they came from. Millions of people are actively engaged in some form of family research. Although in our modern world, Chatham is a small rural town, it is also a County Seat in a region first settled in the mid-1700's. Many of those first residents and their descendants continued on as business opportunities, family, love, or just plain old wanderlust came over them. Thus, a surprisingly large number of folks can trace their family roots through our area.

Although many of you came to this part of this site looking for particular resources, some may be just curious about all the excitement. Kimberly Powell at genealogy.about.com list some common reasons to research your family's history:

- To satisfy your curiosity about yourself and your roots.
- To provide your children with a sense of who their ancestors were, where they came from and how they lived their lives.
- To preserve family cultural and ethnic traditions for future generations.
- To compile a medical family history to give family members an advantage in the battle against inherited diseases or defects.
- To qualify for a lineage or heritage society.
- To assemble and publish a family history book, whether for family members or for profit.
- To discover facts that others have overlooked and solve the puzzle of a lifetime.

Several local historians and history buffs are in the Chatham area. Pittsylvania Historical Society members are particularly helpful to those search for information on forebearers that may have come through Chatham. Two potentially useful publications are an article entitled "Genealogical Treasures at the Clerk's Office," by Herman Melton and Henry Mitchell, in the November 1991 issue of *the Packet*, the quarterly journal of the Pittsylvania Historical Society and a brochure entitled *A Visitors Guide to Historical Genealogical Research in Chatham, VA*, by the same authors, published in 1997 by [Chatham First](#).

Both of these sources will point you to the Pittsylvania County Clerk's Office (3 North Main Street, 432-7887) and the [Pittsylvania County Public Library](#) (24 Military Drive, 432-3271), both located within blocks of each other in downtown Chatham.

On the web, the authors of the articles as well as Patricia and Sarah Mitchell have compiled a wonderful list of [resources](#) which includes both online resources, contact information for individual researchers, as well as additional information about information physically available (in other words, the old fashioned, non-computerized, type of primary resources that gets the blood of a genealogist pumping) at the [County Clerk's Office](#) and the [County Public Library](#) [C](#)